

Tale Feathers

Dec 2001

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MITCH LEACHMAN
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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TIME

by Paul Bauer

Did you know about the 18 or more exceptional local birding field trips designed and planned by Jim Malone and often pre-scouted by Charlene Malone. They both put a massive amount of effort into each field trip to maximize our enjoyment. The pace is relaxed and educational. The goal is to show each birder every bird! Not an easy task.

A recent day trip was really three different field trips rolled into one tremendously rewarding day. We had an early start at Carlyle Lake, and did our early birding in the dense forests of Hazlet State Park. Selected areas had trees loaded with various berries which were attractive to the birds, made them hyperactive and thus easy to spot.

Next we moved to the boat harbor, and got onto stable pontoon boats. This was the fourth year for the Annual Inland Pelagic Trip and the large group needed four boats this year! For over two hours we explored the entire lake and all the inlets, finding both common and rare birds again this year. With personal radios for communication between boats, everyone had a chance to see any uncommon or rare birds up close and personal compared to any possible views from land. Charlene again made many shopping bags of air blown pop-corn

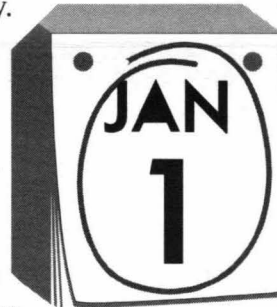
(no oil). This is used to chum the gulls in very close as we slowly troll along. Numerous closeup photographs of birds in flight are possible during these maneuvers. We also enjoyed a relaxed lunch while on the boats.

After returning to the harbor, we headed to the extreme north end of Carlyle Lake, and the prime shore birding area called parking Lot #3. Again we were treated to numerous good birding experiences as we walked, with our scopes about one-half mile, on the levee to the south. Can you imagine all of this adventure packed into one day. Some folks left after docking the boats, but no one was disappointed that day! Many of the field trips end at noon, but all are very rewarding experiences.

This is just one example of the fun and adventure that you are missing when you don't come out for a St. Louis Audubon field trip. Always read the upcoming birding trip plans described in each newsletter by Jim Malone.

Make it a New Year's Resolution now to join at least one field trip each month. You will be well rewarded with exceptional birding experiences, and joyous fellowship with other persons that have similar interests in nature.

ENJOY LIFE- GO BIRDING
WITH US!



St. Louis Audubon Society

VOLUNTEERS

Sat and/or Sun, Dec 8/9
Washington State Park Glade
Restoration
Help the Sierra Club and MO
DNR re-establish the open,
native glade community of wild-
flowers and grasses on selected,
rocky slopes in the park.
Hard, physical work, but the
results are well worth it!
Contact Susan Farrington at
(314) 577-9402 or
susanfmo@aol.com.

Join us for the next newsletter
mailing party! December 21 at
7:30 pm. Call or email the edi-
tor to learn where.

Get Published!

The deadline for the Jan. issue
is Dec. 10. Please send arti-
cles, events and letters to
Anne.

E-mail ambolte@swbell.net
phone 314.832.0938
post 6939 Sharp
St. Louis, MO 63116

Member Profiles

This month continues our profiles of St Louis Audubon members.

**Mary Dueren was elected to the board as President in April of 2000.
How would you describe your educational background?**

I received my Bachelor of Science in Biology, minor in Chemistry from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

How would you describe your current occupation?

I have been employed with Quest Diagnostics for 21 years as a Medical Technologist. I am currently a Technical Client Services Rep mainly assisting the needs of hospitals, clinics and physicians. I research test information and resolved technical problems for our clients.

What is your current function/role with SLAS?

I am currently serving as president of our chapter. The president's functions are many and varied. I have been overseeing routine business for our chapter as well as a facilitator at board meetings.

What is your #1 conservation concern at any level, local to global?

My concern is at a more local level. I am very concerned about the threat of urban sprawl and the pressures it puts on green and agricultural areas. Transportation is another concern and part of the urban sprawl issues. A prime example is the Page Avenue extension which is almost literally in my backyard. This will be totally out dated by the time it opens in 2003 so what has MODOT really achieved?

In what ways can NAS or SLAS address this concern?

SLAS was one the voices strongly opposing the Page Ave. development. NAS has had some policies published on urban sprawl, but right now the battle lines are drawn for ANWR. This is a real threat to natural habitat not unlike our local fights to protect green spaces around the metropolitan St. Louis Area. I will be curious to see the outcome of this very public dispute.

What is your long-term vision/goals for SLAS?

I would like to see SLAS continue to bring the beginning birder to new venues for bird watching. Long term, a nature center will help bring the Audubon vision to many in the area. SLAS has a history of excellent birding and conservation and it should continue.

Volunteer Thanks

Thanks to some dedicated SLAS volunteers; the Two Rivers Project is underway. The project's first focus has been the installation of nest boxes for Prothonotary Warblers. Thanks to Lynn and Jerry Breakstone, Mike Grant, Sue Gustafson, and Mitch Leachman, a dozen boxes were built, sited, and installed in the Gilbert Lake area of Two Rivers NWR. Thanks also to the Two Rivers staff, especially John Mabery, refuge manager.

Next comes the real work of monitoring the nest box activity. Keep an eye on the newsletter for a call for volunteers late in the winter. For questions about the Two Rivers Project, please contact Mitch Leachman at (314) 739-5112.

Conservation Report

by Sue Gustafson

Local conservation campaign: St. Louis Audubon continues to participate with a consortium of local conservation-based groups that are requesting that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the effects of the proposed Holnam Cement Co. plant south of St. Louis. The plant would affect wildlife habitat on 4000 acres of riparian woodlands (home to threatened and endangered species) in addition to causing deleterious effects on air quality and subsequent human health implications. With the generous support of the Florence Fund, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit that funds grassroots media activism, The Missouri Coalition for the Environment launched a media campaign on four fronts - radio, billboards, ads on clean air buses, and a new web site www.stopholnam.com. Check out the website!

To continue this important media campaign we are seeking contributions from concerned citizens. Please give as generously as you can to the Missouri Coalition for the Environment Foundation's Stop Holnam Campaign! Your TAX DEDUCTIBLE contribution will be used exclusively to fund the Stop Holnam Media Campaign!

Make checks out to:

Missouri Coalition for the Environment Foundation Stop Holnam Campaign

Mail checks to: 6267 Delmar, Suite 2E, St. Louis, MO 63130

Each amount buys the indicated number of days of advertising:

☐ \$100/ 2 days ☐ \$300/ 3 days ☐ \$500/ 10 days ☐ \$1,000/ 20 days ☐ \$1,500/ 1 month ☐ other

Include your name and address and association with St. Louis Audubon Society

National Audubon Society campaign: There is an article in the November issue of Audubon magazine regarding the potential poisoning of blackbirds by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has proposed a poisoning program aimed at reducing blackbird populations by 2 million per year for three years starting in the spring of 2002 to provide protection for sunflower growers in the Northern Plains. APHIS poisoned several million blackbirds between 1994 and 1999. Audubon opposes the blackbird-poisoning program because it cannot be justified on economic or scientific grounds. Blackbirds are estimated to damage about one to two percent of the \$300 million annual production of sunflowers. More importantly, APHIS has not shown that other grassland bird species are not eating the poison laid out for the blackbirds. Sixty nine other bird species have been observed around the poisoned plots. These include species of federal concern and birds on Audubon's watchlist such as Baird's sparrow, Le Conte's sparrow, and the bobolink. The blackbird poisoning program is opposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Audubon Dakota, and National Audubon. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be issued in which St. Louis Audubon will provide public comment on, but you can help individually by visiting <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/contact/default.asp?subject=41> which will allow you to submit an electronic letter to USDA Secretary Veneman with copies to your U.S. Senators and Representative. Make your voice heard in this important bird conservation effort.



EMERSON

Special Thanks!



Master Naturalist Certificate

Join the growing number of St. Louisians interested in our natural world this spring by starting course work or workshops for the Master Naturalist Certificate.

In cooperation with the St. Louis Audubon Society, the St. Louis Community College at Meramec through the Biology Department and the Continuing Education division proposes to offer a Master Naturalist Certificate Program.

The program would consist of three main components:

1. Three core academic courses- Conservation and Ecology (BIO:117)

Field Botany (BIO:119)

Field Zoology (BIO:120)

2. Three elective academic courses to be chosen from: Marine Biology (BIO:144)

Field Experience in Marine Biology (BIO:145)

Desert Ecology (BIO:146)

Field Experience in Desert Ecology (BIO:147)

Ozark Ecology

Field Experience in Ozark Ecology

Introduction to Geology (GEO:102)

Introduction to Astronomy (PSI:111)

Meteorology (PSI:123)

3. Six elective workshops offered through Continuing Education. This semester's workshops include butterfly identification by the St. Louis Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association; amphibians by the St. Louis Herpetological Society; backyard bird habitat and more by the Webster Groves Nature Study Society; how to lead a nature walk (for any group or society) by the St. Louis Audubon Society; spring birds by the St. Louis Audubon Society; identifying spring wildflowers by the Missouri Native Plant Society; and new this semester is the backyard astronomy by the St. Louis Astronomical Society.

The workshops range in length from one night to four nights plus one or two field trips. If you are interested in the Master Naturalist Certificate call Continuing Education at 314-984-7777 or for more information call Vicki Flier at 314-968-9166.

Workshop topics change each semester.

For a schedule of classes please call 314-984-7777.

After successful completion of these three components, Master Naturalist Certificates would be awarded. These educated and trained Master Naturalists would then be able to share their knowledge through volunteer and professional opportunities at nature and green facilities in the greater St. Louis area and receive recognition awards from the St. Louis Audubon Society.

Check with the college to verify times and dates.

SPRING WORKSHOP SCHEDULE 2002:

HOW TO LEAD AN EFFECTIVE FIELD TRIP

Sponsored by St. Louis Audubon Society

BEYOND BACKYARD BIRDING

Sponsored by Webster Groves Nature Study Society

INTRODUCTION TO ASTRONOMY WITH YOUR EYES AND BINOCULARS

Sponsored by St. Louis Astronomical Society

SPRING BIRDS: BEYOND WARBLERS

Sponsored by St. Louis Audubon Society

LOCAL BUTTERFLIES: IDENTIFICATION AND NATURAL HISTORY

Sponsored by North American Butterfly Association-St. Louis Chapter

SPRING WILDFLOWERS OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA

Sponsored by Missouri Native Plant Society

AMPHIBIANS

Sponsored by St. Louis Herp Society

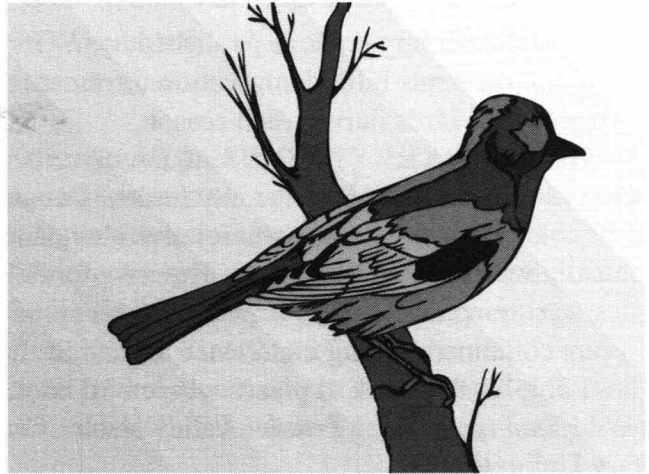
Late Fall Birding in St. Louis

By Jim Malone

Our November visit to Riverlands was a rousing success! Thirty people joined us to look at waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and gulls. Their efforts were rewarded with great views of Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks (including a Krieder's race bird), Bonaparte's gulls, and ducks like Buffleheads, Scaup, Ring-Necked Ducks, and beautiful Redheads. The best birds of the trip, however, were a Common Loon, and a female Black Scoter. The quality of these birds was only outweighed by the camaraderie of the birders and the wonderful weather. Come join us on some of the following walks as we move into the time of year when great varieties of waterfowl and raptors invade the St. Louis area. The following trips are assured to be equally productive.

December 8 (Saturday) Riverlands EDA, 1 PM As much fun as we had at Riverlands on the trip mentioned above, it is often more interesting in the afternoon. The angle of the afternoon light makes viewing easier in many of the Riverlands locations. In addition, gulls and waterfowl pack into the sloughs as the light falls. This time of year, Short-eared Owls may be seen flying over the grasses at dusk, and we will be there to see them. To get to the meeting point, take route 367 North from I-270. At the Missouri side of the Clark bridge (which crosses the Mississippi), turn right at the Fisca gas station to enter Riverlands. Turn right at the first road (Wise Road) and we will meet in the Teal Pond Parking lot. Dress warmly, as the winds at Riverlands can be quite penetrating this time of year.

January 5 (Saturday) Horseshoe Lake State Park, 9 AM Winter birding at Horseshoe lake nearly always includes lots of great Sparrow variety, Ducks, Gulls, and Grebes. Winter trips to this are in past years have shown us dark phase Rough-Legged Hawks, Horned and Eared Grebes, Long-tailed Ducks, and lots of interesting gulls. This year should show us no less. To get to the meeting point, take I-70 East from St. Louis. After passing the I-70/I-64 split, take the exit for highway 111. Turn left (North) and follow 111 about 2-3 miles to the Park entrance on the left. We will meet at the first parking lot on the right side of the main drive.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

The Mississippi River Research Consortium (MRRC) is a private, non-profit organization of scientist, natural resource managers, educators, and students, as well as individuals from the general public who seek to exchange current information concerning the water and land resources of the Mississippi River basin and factors that influence them.

The MRRC's 34th Annual Meeting is to be held April 25-26, 2002, in La Crosse, Wisconsin. More information concerning our organization and the upcoming meeting can be found on the MRRC Homepage (<http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/mrrc.html>).

April 25-26, 2002—Mississippi River Research Consortium Annual Meeting.

Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, WI.

Contact Brent Knights, Upper Midwest

Environmental Science Center, 575

Lester Ave., Onalaska, Wisconsin 54650.

E-mail: brent_knights@usgs.gov

Phone: (608) 783-7550 ex.22

Sincerely,

Jeffrey L. Arnold

Vice President, Mississippi River Research Consortium

E-Mail: jlarnold@staff.uiuc.edu

Phone: (309) 543-6000

BIRDING GUIDES FOR ST. LOUIS AND MISSOURI

A useful birding guide is published by WGNSS uniquely for the St. Louis area. This book is over 200 pages of complements bird identification information in popular field guides with specific advice on where and when to find birds during each season.

BIRDS OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA describes more than 125 locations to observe birds in Missouri and Illinois, all within 50 miles of the city limits. Detailed directions are provided to each location and supported with 17 colored maps. Changes in relative abundance of each bird species for each month are displayed graphically with colored bar-charts. Reviews for 380 species reported in our area provides clues where each species was found and may be expected. This spiral-bound book was written by five authors with more than 200 years combined birding experience around St. Louis.

Look for this book at places where bird books are sold: Missouri Botanical Garden Gift Shop; numerous Wild Bird type stores; Powder Valley Nature Center; Zoo Gift Shop; Butterfly House at Faust Park and Library Unlimited; etc.

Another birding guide has just been published this fall by the Audubon Society of Missouri which covers the entire state. Compiled and edited by Kay and Bill Palmer, this spiral bound guide includes contributions from 62 of Missouri's most experienced birders, with information on 143 locations. The state is divided into Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southwest and Southeast sections, with a separate chapter for 12 of the major birding areas in the St. Louis area.

To order this book by mail; send a check for \$20.00 (\$17.00 and \$3.00 for shipping) made out to AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI. Mail to Barb Duncan, 1918 London Way, Jefferson City, MO 65109. Locally this book is available at the Missouri Botanical Garden gift shop and at Wild Birds Unlimited stores.

Contact Paul Bauer during Audubon/WGNSS birding field trips. (314/921-3972) for information on both books.

Christmas Counts Help with Bird Research

Each winter, organized counts of wintering birds are performed during December and January all across America to learn where the birds are spending their winter. In each of these Christmas counts, teams of birders of all skill levels search a pre-arranged 17 mile circle to see how many and which species of birds they can find. The results of these counts are compiled for the entire country, and used to determine the health of wintering populations of many bird species. In the St. Louis area there are four such counts open to the public, and each one needs your help to successfully find all of these wintering birds. Details for each count follow. Please contact the organizers for one or more of these events and come join us!

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contacts</u>
Pere Marquette State Park mrbobthomas@hotmail.com	Dec. 15, 2001	Bob Thomas (636) 397-0123 or Helen Wuestenfeld (618) 498-5335
Carlyle Lake (Southern Illinois)	Dec 18, 2001	Dan Kassebaum (618) 233-5451 Kieth McMullen at warbler@intertek.net
Weldon Springs (St. Charles Co.)	Dec. 29, 2001	Tom Parmeter (314) 921-6017
Orchard Farm (St. Charles Co.)	Jan. 1, 2002	Randy Korotev (314) 993-0055

Enjoy Life! Go Birding !!

Smew Reunion

The Audubon Society of Missouri, the Missouri Bird Record Committee, and the St. Louis Audubon Society are co-sponsoring a Smew Reunion to be held in Alton, IL and St. Charles county, MO, January 19, 2002.

You are invited to join birders from the Midwest for a Smew Reunion at the Day's Inn in Alton, IL on January 19. We will begin the day with a breakfast buffet, with serving starting at 6:30 AM. A gull workshop, lead by Bill Rowe, Secretary of the Missouri Bird Records Committee, will start at 7:00 AM. Field trips will depart from the Days Inn at 9:30 AM to seek gulls, waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and a returning Smew. Depending on location of the gulls, field trips will either be all day, or consist of two half-day outings with a break for lunch. Likely locations will include The Corps of Engineer's Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO, Melvin Price Lock and Dam #26, IL Horseshoe Lake, IL, Lake Carlyle, IL, and other hot spots along the Mississippi River. Field trip leaders, who will be knowledgeable about gulls, will be members of ASM, MBRC, and St. Louis Audubon.

Blocks of rooms have been reserved for the night of Friday January 18. The special rates will be held until January 2, 2002 under the name of the Audubon Society of Missouri. Call the Days Inn, in Alton, IL, (heated indoor pool and sauna) to reserve a room at \$55.05 (tax not included) for a single with queen or king sized bed or \$59.63 (tax not included) for a double that can sleep up to four. Call the Days Inn at (800) Days Inn or (618) 463-0800. Rooms are also available at the Alton, IL Super 8 Motel, (618) 465-8885, which is located next door to the Days Inn. Rates at the Super 8 are \$49.88 + tax for all rooms, regardless of number of occupants.



MARCH TRIP TO TANZANIA IS A GO!

The minimum number of persons required for the trip has been met. So far, 8 people are going with 7 spaces remaining. This trip is from Feb. 28 through March 10, 2002 during the annual wildebeest calving. We see 300 or more species of birds and 40+ species of mammals during visits to Lake Manyara National Park, Ngorongoro Crater National Park, Olduvai Gorge and Serengeti National Park. Please decide quickly to avoid being left out.

For a detailed itinerary, contact Paul Bauer 314/921-3972

Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Society 2001 - 2002

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St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

Membership category desired:

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Please support your local chapter. Use this form to join or renew.